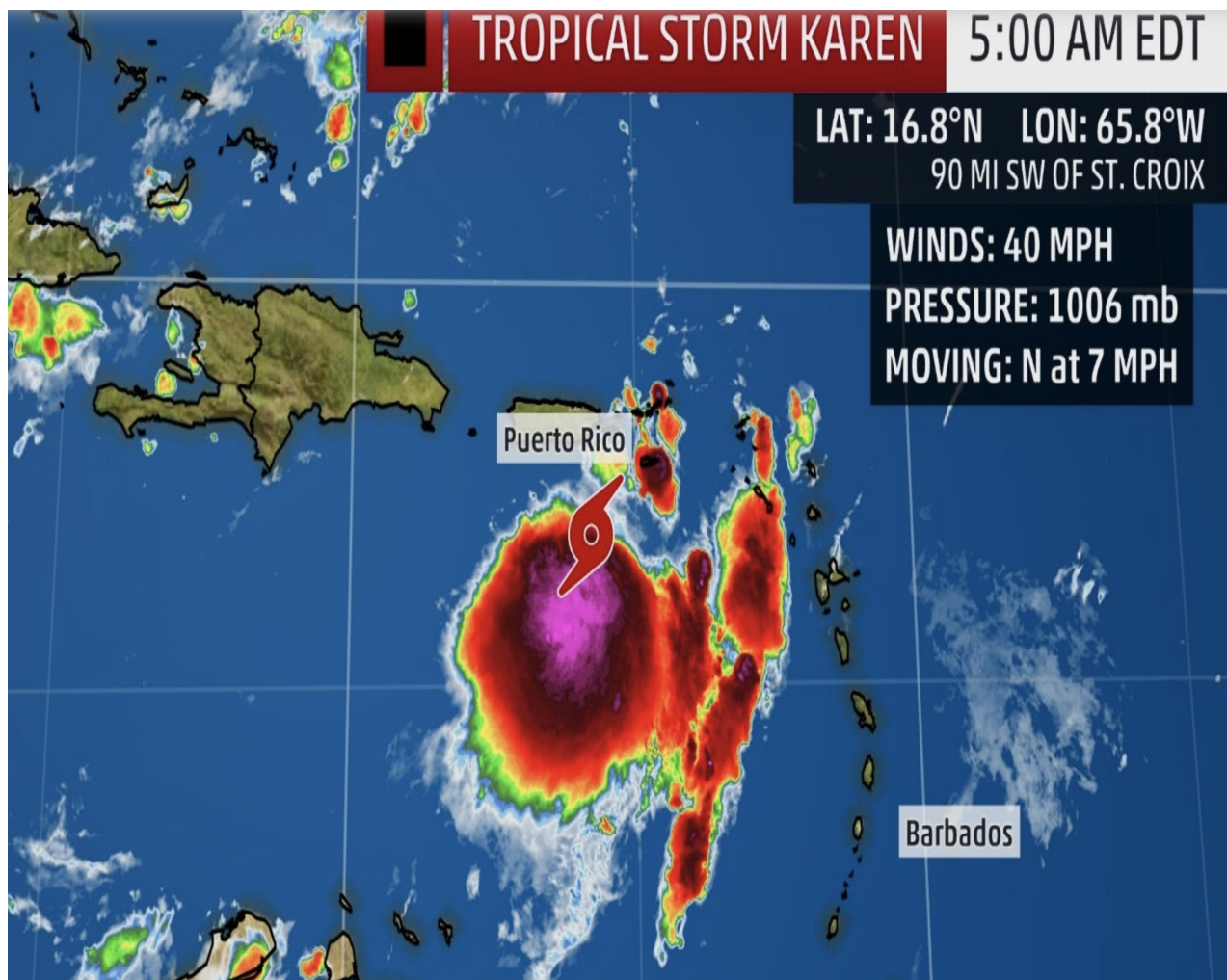


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Karen Strengthens Into Tropical Storm Again, Will Pass Near Or Over USVI And Puerto Rico Later Today; Additional Strengthening Forecast

Weather Updates / **Published On September 24, 2019 10:01 AM /**

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Karen, which was downgraded to a tropical depression at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, has regained strength and is once more a tropical storm, the National Hurricane Center said in its 5:00 a.m. advisory on Tuesday. The system is expected to bring heavy rainfall, flooding and mudslides across the USVI and Puerto today and into Wednesday, at which point it will move away from the U.S. territories.

As of last night, no curfew was in place, and the government and banks will remain closed today.

A tropical storm warning remains in effect for the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, including Vieques and Culebra, and the British Virgin Islands.

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A Tropical storm warning means that tropical storm conditions are expected somewhere within the warning area.

Interests elsewhere in the Lesser Antilles should monitor the progress of Karen.

According to N.H.C.'s 5:00 a.m. advisory, the center of Tropical Storm Karen was located by the San Juan Doppler radar near latitude 16.8 North, longitude 65.8 West. Karen is moving toward the north near 7 mph (11 km/h), and this general motion is expected to continue today. A north-northeastward motion is forecast tonight through Wednesday night.

On the forecast track, the center of Karen will pass near or over Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands today, and then move over the western Atlantic tonight and Wednesday.

Maximum sustained winds have increased to near 40 mph with higher gusts. Additional strengthening is forecast during the next 48 hours. Tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 80 miles from the center. The estimated minimum central pressure is 1006 mb (29.71 inches).

Rainfall

Karen is expected to produce the following rainfall accumulations through Wednesday:

- Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands: 2 to 4 inches, isolated 8 inches.
- Leeward Islands: 1 to 3 inches, isolated 5 inches.

These rains may cause flash flooding and mudslides, especially in mountainous areas.

Wind

Tropical-storm-force winds, especially in gusts, are expected in the warning area by late morning. Winds could be higher on the windward sides of hills and mountains, and also in elevated terrain.

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